

There are only a few times I have felt real fear in my life. One was when my husband did a tour of duty in Iraq and during a phone call a bomb went off and the call was interrupted. Because of operational security all communication was shut down for 3 days. I lived in a state of complete anxiety during these 3 days.

When I started working with refugees I realized that they had lived in with this complete level of anxiety in their lives while they were in their homeland and refugee camps. I remember watching a play that was written, directed, and played by a group of refugees from Myanmar. The play showed them trying to set homes and schools but military police coming and beating and killing them. It showed them going from place to place just trying to establish a safe place but being driven out by military with families becoming smaller and smaller as they were killed.

This was their reality until they found safety and security here in the United States. When they came here to our beautiful safe country it takes them a while to find peace. A life with just normal problems of being too busy or making sure their kids get good grades. Before they came here they lived perpetually with that anxiety that I had felt for 3 brief days.

HRC 28 will cause my friends new to America to have new anxiety. They will feel that this place of safety is truly a place where they are not welcomed. It sends a message to people who are living in this anxiety that they will not be welcomed here. Refugees are carefully being vetted now in a process that can take at least a year. This process includes but is not limited to each refugee being cleared by National Counterterrorism Center, FBI, DHS, and Department of Defense. While it is appropriate to review this process, putting a complete halt to incoming refugees will cause those in the middle of being vetted to live in additional horror. It will also stress the families that are waiting here for their loved ones that are in this process.

Thank you,

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